

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 24 and 39 without prejudice, and amend claims 23, 25 and 29 so that the claim set reads as follows:

1 –22. (previously withdrawn)

23. (amended) A protein that is capable of binding to α_2 M, wherein α_2 M is an α_2 macroglobulin and that said protein comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No 6 or a functional variant thereof that is capable of binding to α_2 M and has at least 78% homology to SEQ ID No 6 over at least 30 amino acids, wherein said protein is substantially isolated and purified.

24. (withdrawn)

25. (amended) A protein according to claim 23 24, wherein the functional variant has at least 78% homology to SEQ ID No 6 over at least 100 amino acids.

26. (previously added) A protein according to claim 23 comprising one or more tandem repeats, wherein the repeated sequence is from 21 to 35 amino acids in length.

27. (previously added) A protein according to claim 26, wherein the repeated sequence comprises amino acids 59 to 86 of SEQ ID No 6 or a variant thereof that has at least 75% homology to amino acids 59 to 86 of SEQ ID No 6.

28. (previously added) A protein according to claim 23, wherein the variant is from a *S. pyogenes* strain other than SF370.

29. (amended) A peptide comprising a fragment of at least 6 amino acids in length of a protein that is capable of binding to α_2 M, wherein α_2 M is an α_2 macroglobulin and that comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No 6 or a functional variant thereof that is capable of binding to α_2 M and has at least 78% homology to SEQ ID No. 6 over at least 30 amino acids, wherein said peptide is substantially isolated and purified.

30. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 29 comprising a fragment of at least 15 amino acids in length of the protein of claim 23.

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31. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 30 comprising a fragment of at least 20 amino acids of the protein of claim 23.
32. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 29 that is capable of generating an immune response against group A streptococcus.
33. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 29 that binds α_2M .
34. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 29, comprising one or more tandem repeats, wherein the repeated sequence is from 21 to 35 amino acids in length.
35. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 29 comprising amino acids 59 to 86 of SEQ ID No 6 or a variant thereof with at least 75% homology to amino acids 59 to 86 of SEQ ID No 6.
36. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 35 comprising two or more repeats of amino acids of 59 to 86 of SEQ ID No 6 or of a variant thereof with at least 75% homology to amino acids 59 to 86 of SEQ ID No 6.
37. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 29 wherein the fragment has at least 78% homology to SEQ ID No 6 over at least 30 amino acids.
38. (previously added) A peptide according to claim 37, wherein the fragment has at least 78% homology to SEQ ID No 6 over at least 100 amino acids.
39. (withdrawn)